

Claims

1 *Sub*
2 *a1*
3 1. A machine-based method comprising
4 analyzing an e-mail message to derive response
5 information concerning a commercial transaction, and
6 based on the derived information, and
7 automatically generating commercial transaction data
8 in a format that is usable to automatically complete the
9 commercial transaction.

10 2. The method of claim 1 in which the commercial
11 transaction comprises an order for a product or service.

1 3. The method of claim 1 in which the e-mail
2 message comprises at least part of an e-mail sent to a
3 customer and responses of the customer to the e-mail.

4 *3*
5 4. The method of claim 1 in which the automatic
6 completion of the commercial transaction comprises order
7 fulfillment.

1 *Sub*
2 *a2*
3 5. A machine-based method comprising
4 sending an e-mail message to a customer offering a
5 product or service for sale, the e-mail message comprising
6 locations for response by the customer indicating his
7 intention to order the product or service,
8 receiving from the customer an e-mail message that
9 includes the response,
10 based on the received e-mail, automatically
11 generating order information in a format usable
12 automatically by an order fulfillment system to cause the
13 order to be filled.

1 6. A machine-based method comprising
2 analyzing an e-mail message to derive response
3 information concerning a commercial transaction,
4 automatically identifying response information which
5 requires resolution of an issue with the source of the e-
6 mail message, and

SWB
F1

1 11¹⁰ 12. The method of claim 12 in which the piece
2 comprises a marketing campaign or a marketing flight.

1 12¹⁰ 13. The method of claim 11 in which the inbound
2 messages contain information that links them to the
3 corresponding outbound messages, and the associating step
4 uses the link information.

1 13¹² 14. The method of claim 13 further comprising
2 automatically parsing the inbound messages for order
3 information.

1 15. A machine-based method comprising
2 sending outbound e-mail messages associated with
3 commercial transactions,
4 storing information related to each of the outbound
5 messages in a database, the information being useful for
6 completing the commercial transactions, the information not
7 being contained in the outbound messages,
8 analyzing inbound e-mail messages that result from
9 the outbound messages and that contain response information
10 useful in completing the commercial transactions, and
11 automatically merging the response information with
12 corresponding information in the database for use in
13 completing the transactions.

1 16. A machine-based method comprising
2 sending outbound e-mail messages associated with
3 commercial transactions,
4 storing information related to each of the outbound
5 messages in a database, the information being useful for
6 completing the commercial transactions, the information not
7 being contained in the outbound messages,
8 analyzing inbound e-mail messages that result from
9 the outbound messages and that contain response information
10 useful in completing the commercial transactions,

12/1/02
8 automatically managing an e-mail dialog with the
1 source to resolve the issue.

slb
11/1/03
2 7. The method of claim 6 in which at least some of
3 the e-mail dialog is performed automatically.

12/1/02
3 8. Software guided interactive e-mail dialogs to
4 resolve, on behalf of a vendor, customer issues that occur
5 in direct response e-mails that are automatically identified
6 as requiring a dialog.

slb
1 9. A machine-based method comprising
2 automatically sorting e-mail messages, based on
3 response information contained in the messages, into e-mail
4 messages that can be processed automatically to generate
5 commercial transactions, e-mail messages in which the
6 response information is inadequate to permit generation of
7 commercial transactions, and e-mail messages that may be
8 subjected to exception handling to yield information that is
9 sufficient to generate commercial transactions.

11/1/03
1 10. A machine-based method comprising
2 analyzing an e-mail message to derive response
3 information concerning a commercial transaction, and
4 automatically generating a confirmatory e-mail
5 message to the source of the e-mail message confirming that
6 the commercial transaction has been or will be completed.

1 11. A machine-based method comprising
2 receiving inbound e-mail messages that result from
3 corresponding outbound e-mail messages associated with a
4 marketing program, the inbound messages containing response
5 information, each of the outbound messages being associated
6 with a distinct piece of the marketing program, and
7 automatically associating the response information
8 in each of the inbound messages with the corresponding
9 distinct piece of the marketing program.

5/B
11 identifying inbound e-mail messages that cannot be
12 processed automatically to generate the commercial
13 transactions, and
14 using the database information to assist in
15 exception handling of the identified inbound messages.

Add B

Add C